

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LAGOS 10631 161522Z

20

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 OC-06 CCO-00 FCC-01 OTPE-00 /023 W
----- 014682

R 161108Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6803
USDOC WASHDC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LAGOS 10631

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BENC, ETEL, NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECT

REF: (A) LAGOS 9024 (B) LAGOS 8750 (C) STATE 187079

1; CHARLES BUTLER, AMERICAN EXECUTIVE RECENTLY RETIRED AFTER TWENTY YEARS WITH SYRACUSE NEW YORK TELEPHONE COMPANY, HAS JUST ARRIVED LAGOS ON ONE YEAR CONTRACT WITH ITU TO BE PROJECT MANAGER FOR NIGERIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECT (NTP). ACCORDING TO UNDP OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR, BUTLER, WHO HAS MA IN EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE IN PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT AS WELL AS TECHNICAL BACKGROUND, SHOULD BE WELL SUITED TO DEMANDS OF ITU PROJECT MANAGER'S JOB, ALTHOUGH THIS IS BUTLER'S FIRST OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENT. PREVIOUS PROJECT MANAGERS REPORTEDLY WERE AGGRESSIVE YOUNG BRITISH ENGINEERS WHO WANTED MOVE TOO FAST AND DO THINGS IN OWN WAY, AND THUS ALIENATED THEIR NIGERIAN COUNTERPARTS. EMBASSY HOPES BUTLER'S PRESENCE WILL FACILITATE EFFORTS ON BEHALF U.S. FIRMS SINCE SWEDISH STATE TELEPHONE COMPANY EXPERTS WHO MAKE UP REST OF ITU TEAM HAVE BEEN LEERY OF COMMERCIAL CONTACTS.

2. AT SOCIAL GATHERING AT HOME OF UNDP TELECOMMUNICATIONS MAN, EMBOFF MET BUTLER AND SWEDE WHO WORKS UNDER BUTLER AS SENIOR EXPERT IN CHARGE OF SWITCHING ON ITU TEAM. (THERE ARE OTHER SENIOR EXPERTS FOR TRANSMISSION AND LOCAL LINES. EACH OF THESE HAS SEVERAL ENGINEERS UNDER HIM.) SWEDE STATED THAT DECISION BY MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS TO RESTRICT SWITCHGEAR SPECIFICATIONS ON NTP BIDS
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LAGOS 10631 161522Z

AT LAST MINUTE (AS REPORTED REFTELS) WAS DECISION IMPOSED FROM

HIGH LEVELS AND HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH FOREIGN EXPERTS, WHO IN FACT HAD FAVORED ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY. ALTHOUGH SWEDE PURPOSELY AMBIGUOUS ABOUT WHETHER DECISION INFLUENCED BY SPECIAL INTEREST LOBBYING AT TOP GOVERNMENT ECHELONS, HE ALSO STATED NIGERIANS GENUINELY CAUTIONS ABOUT ADOPTING STATE-OF-THE-ART SWITCHING TECHNOLOGY AND WOULD PREFER TO TEST IT OUT FIRST IN LIMITED WAY. BOTH SWEDE AND BUTLER AGREED THAT MAIN MOTIVE IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR USING ELECTRONIC SWITCHGEAR WAS TO SAVE LABOR, CONSIDERATION WHICH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES LIKE NIGERIA MIGHT LEGITIMATELY JUDGE TO BE A DISADVANTAGE.

3. SWEDISH EXPERT'S COMMENT ECHOES STATEMENTS MADE TO OTHER EMBASSIES BY DIRECTOR OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS I.O. LASODE DURING RECENT TELECOMMUNICATIONS SEMINAR. LASODE SAID MINISTRY ACTUALLY FAVORED ADVANCED ELECTRONIC SWITCHING AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY BUT WANTED FIRST TRY OUT NEW SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT IN SMALL LOCATIONS. IF PILOT EXPERIENCE PROVED SUCCESSFUL UNDER NIGERIAN CONDITIONS, MINISTRY WOULD CERTAINLY CONSIDER USING ELECTRONIC SWITCHING AND OTHER ADVANCED ITEMS IN FUTURE.

4. CONVERSATION WITH BUTLER ALSO BROUGHT UP SUBJECT OF WESTINGHOUSE T-COM AEROSTATS, OR TETHERED BALLOONS. BOTH SWEDISH EXPERT AND UNDP OFFICIAL EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT SELECTION OF THIS TECHNOLOGY AND COST OF PROJECT (DOLLARS 153 MILLION PLUS). BUTLER, WHO APPEARED ANXIOUS NOT TO JUDGE RASHLY AND WHO OF COURSE STILL UNFAMILIAR WITH NIGERIAN SITUATION, NEVERTHELESS OBSERVED THAT IT SEEMED NIGERIANS COULD HAVE HAD A SATELLITE FOR THIS AMOUNT AND WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF. SWEDE VENTURED OPINION THAT NIGERIA HAS GREATLY OVEREMPHASIZED TRANSMISSION AND NEGLECTED LOCAL LINE DEVELOPMENT AND NOW HAS MORE DIFFERENT (AND FREQUENTLY INCOMPATIBLE) TRANSMISSION SYSTEMS THAN ANY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD. GENERAL FEELING IN GROUP WAS THAT NIGERIANS HAD ALLOWED THEIR JUDGEMENT BE OVERCOME BY NAIVE ENTHUSIASM FOR LATEST GIMMICKS IN TRANSMISSION TOGETHER WITH HARD SALES PITCH BY T-COM, AND THAT THERE MIGHT BE STRONG BACKLASH IF AND WHEN EXOTIC AEROSTAT SYSTEM PROVED IMPRACTICAL.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS HEARD SUCH CRITICISM BEFORE, AND MUCH OF IT HAS BEEN DISMISSED BY T-COM AS SNIPING BY RIVALS. COMPANY HAS FURTHER EMPHASIZED 15 YEARS OF SYSTEM'S USE IN U.S. DEFENSE COMMAND AND OTHER PARTS OF WORLD UNDER GRUELING CONDITIONS. NEVERTHELESS, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 LAGOS 10631 161522Z

CRITICISM PERSISTS IN INFORMED CIRCLES AND CAN EVENTUALLY RAISE DOUBTS AT HIGHER POLITICAL LEVELS. AT THE PRESENT MOMENT, DIRECTOR OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS LASODE APPEARS SOLIDLY COMMITTED TO PROJECT WHILE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSIONER WILLIAM REPORTEDLY DOES NOT SHARE HIS ENTHUSIASM.
EASUM

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TELECOMMUNICATION, BUSINESSMEN, BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LAGOS10631
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760350-0896
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760954/aaaabual.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LAGOS 9024, 76 LAGOS 8750, 76 STATE 187079
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 JUL 2004 by ullricre>; APPROVED <18 OCT 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NIGERIAN TELECOMMUNICATIOONS PROJECT
TAGS: BENC, ETEL, NI, (BUTLER, CHARLES)
To: STATE COM
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006